the specified areas are not entitled to enjoy the benefits under the policy in respect of expansion and diversification;

(d) if so, what remedies are available to theim to survive and grow in the free market economy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) to (d)The issues raised by State Governments of North Eastern Region (1) for Income Tax exemption for those units which have begun manufacturing on or after 24.12.1997, as the date applicable for excise duty exemption; and (2) making the North East Industrial Policy cover the whole region rather than specified areas, are under the examinition of the Central Government.

Setting up of Permanent Exhibition Centres by ITPO

†808. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCEAND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether ITPO has decided to set up permanent exhibition centres in all the metropolitan cities of the country for promoting business;

(b) if so, the names of the States where it has been decided to set up such centres;

(c) whether any agreement has been entered into between the ITPO and State Governments;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) by when such centers are likely to be set up in the States?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCEAND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (e) ITPO is setting up Regional Trade Promotion Centres (RTPCs) in some States with the approval and funding support from the Government. Memoranda of Understanding have been signed between ITPO and the State Government of Tamilnadu, Karnataka and West Bengal for setting up of RTPCs at Chennai, Bangalore and Calcutta. As per the MOU's, joint venture companies with equity contributions from the nominated agency of the respective State Governments and ITPO will be set up and registered Under Section 25 of Companies Act to look after the affairs of RTPC. The construction work of Phase-I covering an area of 5000 sq. mtrs. each at Bangalore and Chennai has commenced. The work is expected to be completed in a year's time. The work at Calcutta can start only after the land is handed over by the State Government of West Bengal.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.